

Vista Grande

Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Unit

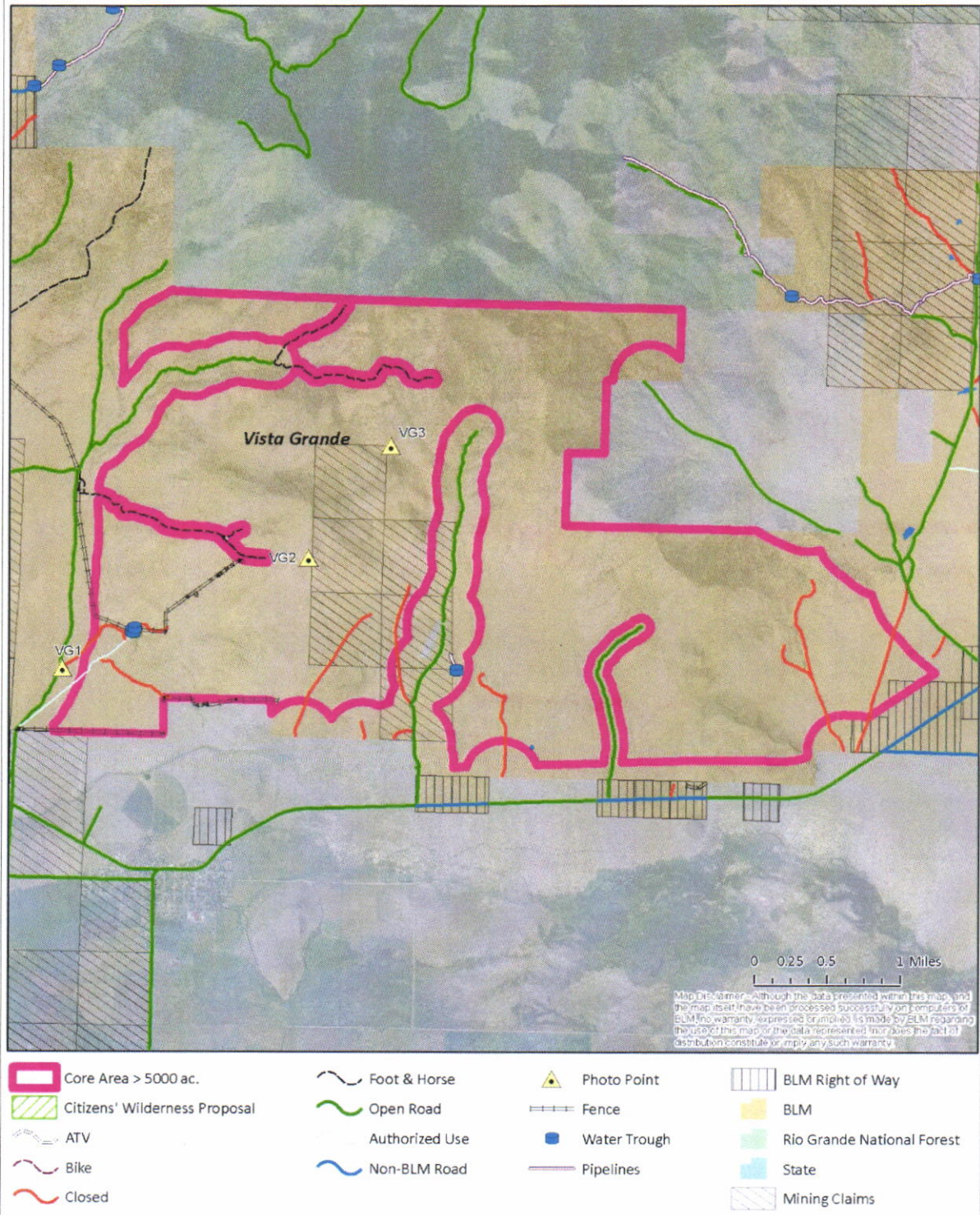


Figure 4 – Vista Grande

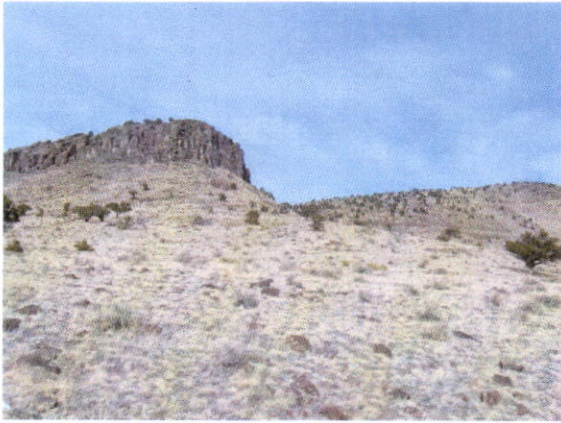
VISTA GRANDE

Photo Point VG2 – From Middle Looking N



Photo Point VG1 – From SW Looking E



Photo Point VG – From North-Central Looking SE Toward Blanca Peak

**Form 1 – Documentation of BLM Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Findings
from Previous Inventory on Record**

(1) Is there existing BLM wilderness characteristics inventory information on all or part of this area?

No X (Go to Form 2) Yes _____ (If yes, and if more than one area is within the area, list the unique identifiers for those areas):

Form 2 - Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier: Vista Grande

Acreage: 7,260

(1) Is the area of sufficient size? (If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check "Yes" and describe the exception in the space provided below)

Yes ☒ No ☐

Description (describe the boundaries of the area – wilderness inventory roads, property lines, etc.):

The Vista Grande inventory area is located entirely on BLM lands adjacent to the Town of Saguache in Saguache County, Co. It is bordered by Colorado Highway 114 on the south, BLM Road 5295 on the west, National Forest System and private lands on the north and an un-numbered BLM road on the east. There are 3 active grazing leases and 5 mining claims in the Vista Grande unit.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Note: If "No" is checked, the area does not have wilderness characteristics; check "NA" for the remaining questions below.

Description (include land ownership, location, topography, vegetation, and summary of major human uses/activities):

The Vista Grande unit is located entirely on BLM lands, just to the north of the Town of Saguache. Access to the unit is readily available via Colorado Highway 114 (which represents the southern boundary on BLM lands) and subsequent BLM open system roads.

The unit is typified by open, sparsely vegetated terrain that continually rises to the north toward Saguache Peak on National Forest System lands. Lands within the Vista Grande unit are classified primarily as Inter-Mountain Basins Semi-Desert Shrub Steppe, Inter-Mountain Basins

Semi-Desert Grassland, Southern Rocky Mountain Piñon-Juniper Woodland, and Rocky Mountain Dry-Mesic and Mesic Mixed Conifer Forest and Woodland.

The principal human activities and imprints of man within the Vista Grande unit include livestock grazing and related facilities, such as water improvements and fences. Local area residents and seasonal visitors also utilize the area recreationally for such purposes as OHV and backcountry driving, hunting and horseback riding.

As part of a cooperative effort with the Town of Saguache to develop a community recreation area, BLM is currently planning for the development of a singletrack mechanized trail system throughout the unit.

(3) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes ☐

No ☒

N/A ☐

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for solitude):

Because of the close proximity to the Town of Saguache and major highways in the San Luis Valley, as well as increasing popularity among mountain bikers, in addition to more traditional uses of this area (which include driving for pleasure, camping, firewood collecting and hunting), combined with the area's minimal topographic relief, lack of vegetation suitable for screening, open terrain, and easy vehicular access throughout the area, *outstanding* opportunities for solitude do not exist in this unit. The area's higher, more forested elevations offer more screening and a greater sense of solitude; however, at essentially no time is a visitor to this landscape free from the sights, sounds and works of man.

(4) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes ☐

No ☒

N/A ☐

Note: If "No" is checked for both 3 and 4, the area does not have wilderness characteristics; check "NA" for question 5.

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation):

The primary recreational use throughout the Vista Grande unit is currently motorized use related to traditional activities, such as: hunting, firewood collecting, and camping. Mechanized use is increasing in the area, though, relative to current planning efforts for the mechanized trail system. There are 2 trails currently associated with the unit and no other recreational facilities. Similar to 'solitude', opportunities exist for primitive and unconfined recreation, however, they cannot be considered 'outstanding'.

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value)?

Yes ☐

No ☐

N/A ☒

Description:

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS*

Area Unique Identifier: Vista Grande

Results of analysis:

Of the 7,260 acres analyzed, 0 acres have wilderness characteristics.

The Vista Grande unit is characterized by open, uniform terrain that lacks vegetative diversity and density necessary to screen visitors from each other, has numerous user-created roads throughout, as well as range improvements for livestock operations. The unit is easily accessible by motorized vehicle and heavily utilized by local citizens and seasonal hunters for OHV recreation, hunting and firewood collecting, and increasingly for mountain biking. The lack of 'outstanding' opportunities for either solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation decisively prevents this unit from possessing wilderness characteristics.

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? ☒ Yes ☐ No
2. Does the area appear to be natural? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A
4. Does the area have supplemental values? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A

Check one:

☐ The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as lands with wilderness characteristics.

☒ The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

Prepared by (team members):

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(Name, Title, Date)

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Name: Andrew Aubert Title: Field Manager

Date: 3 July 2012

***This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-3.**